8:Panikkar I-4,5 (no date) 1918 AWII Kerala AWII Nayar

jars on the moral sense of either the man or the woman. The idea that monogamy necessarily means a higher stage of culture is indeed one of those *a priori* deductions which, though incapable of proof, are still held with dogmatic reverence. Even the curious and very interesting fact that among the Mormons (whose great fault was polygamy, according to those moralists who include monogamy among the Categorical Imperatives), it was the women who fought most strenuously for the maintenance of this custom, which they considered to be their most cherished privilege. It is an indubitable fact that where polygamy exists it is the women who are its chief advocates. The men, on the other hand, consider it a great bother. I have heard many rich men to whom proposals were made for a third or fourth marriage say "sufficient unto me are the evils of one wife." [1]

On the whole I am inclined to say that women in Malabar among the Nāyars at least enjoy, relatively to women elsewhere in India, greater liberty, with regard to individual conduct, family relationship and social life. This no doubt is due to the influence of matrilineal customs.

IV.—THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AMONG THE NĀYARS.

The marriage ceremonies of the Nāyars have always been peculiar. Anthropologists who have studied the Nāyars have, on the whole, failed to understand the significance of these customs. In this connection I propose to speak only of three chief points. First, *The Talikettu Kalyanam* (or the matrimonial ceremony of tying the Tali); secondly, the *Sambandham* (or marital relationship); and thirdly, *Polyandry*.

The *Talikettu Kalyanam*[2] is generally performed on a batch of girls of the same matrilineal family. The age of the eldest girl is generally eleven and rarely thirteen. The idea is that this ceremony should take place before the girl attains puberty.[3] But it is not only the children of the same family that can have a *Talikettu* with the others. The daughter of a male member of the family who belongs to an *enangar* clan or who is too poor to be able to afford the costly ceremony of *Talikettu*, can, with the permission of the *village community*, be placed in a separate seat and her *Tali* also may be tied at the same time.

When the ceremony could be performed, even when a girl is only six months old, it happens that in a *Talikettu Kalyanam* all the girls below eleven are disposed of at the same time. Therefore it takes at least another twelve years for a new batch

[1] See Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, chapter on Mormonism.

[2] The *Tali* is a piece of metal, generally silver or gold, which stands for marriage in all the communities who acknowledge Hinduism.

[3] Among the Nāyars social puberty differs considerably in point of time from physiological puberty. It is a matter of great importance that the former should precede the latter. Any family in which a girl attains her physiological puberty, as evidenced by her first menses, before she had attained her social puberty, is socially outside the pale.

564 or with one of the small sects coming between the Brāhmans and the Nāyars. But she cannot under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a clan, which [264] is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with those of a clan inferior to her; a man may, and does without restriction. 564 Her children by an equal in race and not only in mere 651 social standing, but never those by one who is racially 613 inferior, belong to her taravād.* The children of the inferior mothers are never brought into the taravād of the superior fathers, *i.e.*, they are never brought into it to belong to it, but they may live there. And, where they do so, they cannot enter the taravād kitchen, or touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live in the taravād under these and other disabilities, but 557 are never of it. The custom, which permits a man 564 to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than 831 himself, and prohibits a woman from exercising the same liberty, is called the rule of anulōmam and pratilōmam. Dr. Gundert derives anulōmam from anu, with lōmam (rōmam), hair, or going with the hair or grain. So pratilōmam means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nāyar woman, consorting with a man of a higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social estimation. 558 By cohabitation with a man of a lower division (clan) 564 or caste, she is guilty of pratilōmam, and, if the 831 difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family, to prevent the whole 564 family being boycotted. A corollary of this custom 851 is that a Nambūtiri Brāhman father cannot touch his 783 own children by his Nāyar consort without bathing

* Tarwād or taravād, a marumakkathayam family, consisting of all the descendants in the female line of one common female ancestor.